

## MINUTES

### MANSFIELD ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

Thursday, April 27, 2006

Mansfield Town Hall, Conference Room B

6:30-8:30 PM

PRESENT: K. Grunwald (staff), S. Baxter (staff), S. Daley, A. Bladen, L. Dahn, N. Hovorka, P. Wheeler, K. Paulhus

REGRETS: J. Buck, B. Lehmann, S. Patwa, R. Leclerc, L. Bailey, J. Goldman, D. McLaughlin

#### I. INTRODUCTIONS/MINUTES:

- A. Introductions
- B. Adoption of minutes of March 27, 2006: the minutes were reviewed; it appeared that they could not be accepted in the absence of a quorum.

#### II. COMMUNICATIONS (Consent Agenda, unless otherwise noted)

- A. "Elephants on the Table": communication from the Early Childhood Education Cabinet

*III. NEW BUSINESS*

- A. School Readiness Application: S. Baxter announced that next year's grant is due on May 19. The new childcare center at ECSU has requested 4-5 slots. Questions were raised as to how many Mansfield children currently attend that Center. One suggestion to make it fair was for the number of slots to be proportional to the number of Mansfield residents currently enrolled. Some members felt that one thing to consider would be to add a Center only if one of the existing ones gave up a space. K. Grunwald raised the issue of parent choice, and questioned why we as a Council would not want to make this choice available to Mansfield families? S. Daley asked if this would increase the administrative costs of the grant. M.J. Newman does not feel that any slots should be taken away from any of the existing Centers. N. Hovorka raised the issue that Mansfield is supporting children from other towns through its support of the Discovery Depot; she feels that the Council needs to adopt a policy for how other Centers could be added to this program. A. Bladen said that she feels strongly that the funding is for the children and not the Centers, and that choice should be encouraged. The group decided to table this issue, feeling that we do not have enough time to make an informed decision on this for the upcoming program year.
- B. Response to issues raised in "Elephants on the Table" (All): M.J. Newman acknowledged that the document raises a lot of critical issues, many related to funding for early care. K. Grunwald pointed out that it reflects issues that we have discussed, including funding following the children, the focus on Priority School Districts, and the urban bias that appears to be inherent in the School Readiness program. P. Wheeler spoke in favor of a regional approach, and wondered about other communities in our region that could benefit from these services. N. Hovorka questioned what the Cabinet has accomplished, other than raising these questions. M. J. Newman reported that the cabinet has apparently been given a directive to produce a report with recommendations by June 17. S. Baxter questioned how parents are informed about the CT pre-school curriculum framework. M. J. Newman and A. Bladen both said that they work with parents on how this relates to preparation for kindergarten. K. Grunwald mentioned a link on our website to the Parent's Action Coalition.
- C. Northwood Apartments (A. Bladen): J. Goldman has previously raised the issue of addressing the needs of UConn graduate students who live at Northwood Apts. Anne suggested using

student teachers to provide services to these families; she will work with J. Goldman on this.

- D. Full-Day Kindergarten Observation (K. Paulhus): S. Baxter reported (prior to her arrival) that Katherine Paulhus is planning on sitting in on kindergarten classes, and raised a question as to whether or not the Council is interested in getting more information about how full-day K is going? S. Daley talked about the possibility of sponsoring a forum on all-day K to review what the experience has been. She volunteered to work with Sandy on that. K. Paulhus stressed the importance of including as many people as possible in this forum, and gave many suggestions about publicity for this event and offered to help with publicity when it happens.
- E. Sub-Committee: Family Fun Fair: S. Baxter did a survey of parents and some of the centers. The general feeling is that childcare arrangements have been made prior to the fair. There is an interest in visiting Centers at an open house event. All parents found the Fun Fair to be helpful. The Centers do not feel that this is an opportunity for recruitment, but that it is a positive event for the community.
- F. "Other": K. Grunwald reported on Tour de Mansfield (June 24) and childcare availability for the Annual Town Meeting.  
M. J. Newman reported that there will be an eight-week math and science class at MDD for staff offered by QVCC; staff from all Centers who are interested should contact Mary Jane.

#### IV. PROGRAM UPDATES

- A. School Readiness: no update.
- B. Discovery: Action Plan Update (S. Baxter): no update.

#### V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. "Other": none.

- VI. Next Meeting(s)- May- we have been invited by Teri Lawrence to visit the new ECSU Center on May 17, we could consider this to be our May meeting. The group decided to meet instead on May 31.  
Scheduled Meetings: 6/28/06, NO MEETING JULY, 8/23/06.

- Meetings are held from 6:30- 8:30 PM at a location to be determined. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed, or removed as not needed.

- VII. Adjournment: meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Grunwald